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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO THOUSAND
NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH MEETING (Part II)

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 20 December 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

President:	Mr. AL-ASHTAL	(Yemen)
Members:	Canada	Mr. FORTIER
	China	Mr. LI Daoyu
	Colombia	Mr. PEÑALOSA
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. ANET
	Cuba	Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
	Ethiopia	Mr. TADESSE
	Finland	Mr. TORNUDD
	France	Mr. ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE
	Malaysia	Mr. RAZALI
	Romania	Mr. MUNTEANU
	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	Mr. VORONTSOV
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir David HANNAY
	United States of America	Mr. PICKERING
	Zaire	Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA

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* Reissued for technical reasons.

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READEX FICHE

The meeting was resumed at 1 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): In accordance with the decisions taken at the previous meetings on this item, I invite the representatives of Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahyiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Yugoslavia to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber. I invite the representative of Palestine to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bendjama (Algeria), Mr. Mohiuddin (Bangladesh), Mr. Moussa (Egypt), Mr. Menon (India), Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Al-Anbari (Iraq), Mr. Aridor (Israel), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Al Sabah (Kuwait), Mr. Makkawi (Lebanon), Mr. Treiki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Ould Mohamed Mahmoud (Mauritania), Mr. Hasbi (Morocco), Mr. Umer (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nimah (Qatar), Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Ali (Sudan), Mr. El-Fattal (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia), Mr. Aksin (Turkey), Mr. Al-Shaali (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Silovic (Yugoslavia) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber; Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a place at the Council table.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/22022, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/21995, letter dated 10 December 1990 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/21999, letter dated 13 December 1990 from

(The President)

the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; S/22003, letter dated 14 December 1990 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General; S/22012, letter dated 18 December 1990 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/22017, letter dated 17 December 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the members of the Security-Council:

"The members of the Security Council reaffirm their determination to support an active negotiating process in which all relevant parties would participate leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict through negotiations which should be based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council and which should take into account the right to security of all States in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people.

"In this context they agree that an international conference, at an appropriate time, properly structured, should facilitate efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"However, the members of the Council are of the view that there is not unanimity as to when would be the appropriate time for such a conference.

"In the view of the members of the Council, the Arab-Israeli conflict is important and unique and must be addressed independently, on its own merits."

(The President)

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that is the case.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Your wide experience and diplomatic skills will no doubt contribute to the work of the Council.

My delegation would also like to express its sincere appreciation to Ambassador Thomas Pickering for the commendable manner in which he guided the work of the Council during the rather hectic month of November.

The regrettable and sad incidents which led to the adoption of resolution 672 (1990), in which the Council expressed concern over the safety and protection of civilians in the occupied territories, remains a matter of continued preoccupation to my delegation and indeed to all delegations that attach due importance to the primacy of the rule of law. In this respect, we consider that Israel's willingness to receive an emissary of the Secretary-General to enable him to pursue the mission he embarked upon earlier is a positive development. We hope also that the projected visit by the Secretary-General will contribute to the effort by the Council to address the problem effectively.

As we have indicated on several occasions, we remain opposed to the indiscriminate use of force and collective punishment against innocent Palestinians. We are equally averse to the violence that continues to take a heavy toll among all innocent civilians. The report which the Secretary-General, despite

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

obvious constraints, submitted on 31 October 1990, in accordance with resolution 672 (1990), confirms many of the apprehensions and concerns that the international community harbours regarding the treatment of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Indeed, as that report clearly indicates, the protection of civilians in those territories leaves much to be desired.

The recurrence of violence and the continued loss of life as well as recent deportations accord added significance to the view of the Council that the basis for ensuring the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories is for Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The volatile situation in the area also calls for restraint. As the Secretary-General's report reveals,

> "... the essential facts of the occupation have not changed and the potential for friction and confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians has remained very high". (S/21919, para. 23)

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

The confrontation and continued sense of agitation will remain a permanent feature of the region unless a just and lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East is sought in accordance with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As we reiterate our conviction about the need to convene an international conference on the Middle East, our acute sense of justice impels us to call upon Israel to ensure the full protection of the Palestinians residing in the occupied territories.

As a community of nations, we cannot afford to allow the deterioration of a problem which has already claimed the lives of many. Likewise, the Herculean efforts of the statesmen of the world who have contributed to the improvement of the global political climate cannot be relegated to a level of transient exercises owing to a lack of restraint and balance on the part of some. The emergence of a new order requires that our actions be governed by the rule of law. In this endeavour none of us should be found wanting.

Much as we are concerned about the recent tragic incidents, our response should aim at getting to the heart of the political conflict and engaging the parties concerned in an active negotiating process with a view to addressing the ultimate interests of the Palestinian people through the fulfilment of their legitimate political rights. Likewise, our actions should contribute to respect for the right of all States in the region to live peacefully within recognized and guaranteed borders.

The consultations and negotiations on the draft resolution before us have been protracted. None the less, this arduous process has enabled us to work towards a text that can marshal the support of all members of the Council, in consonance with the tradition of our recent past.

It is our considered view that the adoption of this important text will contribute to the ultimate solution of the problem. It is therefore with a

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

profound sense of satisfaction that we shall vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document S/22022.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I thank the representative of Ethiopia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. ROCHEREAU DE LA SABLIERE (France) (interpretation from French): For more than two months, since the grave events in Jerusalem on 8 October, the Council has again been considering the situation in the occupied territories. The Council has already adopted two resolutions - resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990) - in which it took a unanimous position on the matter. It condemned the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces on 8 October and supported the Secretary-General's decision to send a mission to the region, asking him to submit a report containing, besides the facts, his conclusions on ways to ensure the effective protection of the Palestinians. It is deeply regrettable that the Israeli authorities refused to receive the mission and that Israel persists in its attitude. Despite the obstacles, the Secretary-General submitted a report - for which I should like to thank him, on behalf of my Government - containing particularly noteworthy proposals and suggestions.

We are following closely and with approval the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to protect the Palestinians, and especially his intention to send his Personal Representative to the region soon.

Following new, bloody violence, which we condemn, the Israeli authorities decided to deport four inhabitants of the occupied territories. We condemn those illegal expulsions, by which the Israel authorities chased out of their own country people who were born there and who had always lived there. These banishments contravene the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Moreover, they are likely to perpetuate tension in the occupied territories.

(Mr. Rochereau De La Sabliere, France)

On the basis of the Secretary-General's report, our Council must now, as it is doing, study and adopt as quickly as possible concrete measures to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people and improve their situation. Indeed, it seems to us very important that on this essential matter of the protection of the Palestinians the Council should continue to act independently and with determination, as it began to do in adopting resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), and that it should preserve the unanimity we have, happily, achieved.

In this respect, the draft resolution contains provisions that we find very reasonable, provisions that can be a first response to the requirements of the situation. It is important to reaffirm the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967 and to persuade Israel to recognize this. The idea of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Convention opens up interesting possibilities.

Furthermore, the request to the Secretary-General to monitor the situation, with the help of United Nations personnel, and to keep the Council regularly informed will promote better protection of the Palestinians.

I do not need to recall here my country's well-known position on the substance of the Palestinian issue. But I would add that the recent incidents in Israel and the occupied territories demonstrate, if any further demonstration were required, the urgent need to bring about a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We are more than ever convinced that opening up a dialogue is necessary in order to gain the prospect of a political settlement through negotiation, and that convening an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned and the five permanent members

(Mr. Rochereau De La Sabliere, France)

of the Council, would provide the necessary framework for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict. The conference is mentioned in the statement you have just made, Mr. President, in which there is a direct reference to the text of the draft resolution before us. We welcome the fact that the Council has thus recognized the need for an international conference to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For all the reasons I have given, we shall vote in favour of the draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now put the draft resolution (S/22022) to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour: Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Malaysia, Romania, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Yemen, Zaire

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has therefore been adopted unanimously as resolution 681 (1990).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who have asked to be allowed to make statements after the voting.

Mr. BAGBENI ADEITO NZENGEYA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): A great French writer once said that, in the long run, patience must prevail. Patience has its virtues, and you, Mr. President, have just provided us with positive proof of that fact, for the efforts we have undertaken since 26 November 1990 and that we have pursued with such perseverance and intensity have now been successful. My delegation is pleased at today's outcome, one that honours the Council and that has preserved the spirit of consensus that has inspired all its members in this crucial period in mankind's history. We congratulate you, Mr. President, for having encouraged the consultations and negotiations among Council members that led to the unanimous adoption of resolution 681 (1990).

Since 8 October 1990 the attention of the entire world has been turned to the work of the Security Council as it considered the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and above all, the conclusions set forth in the report of the Secretary-General, which contains recommendations on ways and means to ensure the protection and safety of the Palestinians in their own territories.

In this period of international relations characterized by the endeavour to establish a new world order based on recognition of human rights through the emergence and strengthening of pluralistic democracies, there is an imperative need for every State Member of our Organization to comply with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The State of Israel cannot be an exception to that rule, especially since Security Council resolution 672 (1990) specifically condemned the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces resulting in injuries and loss of human life and called upon Israel to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

(Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, Zaire)

Although, owing to Israel's refusal to accept his delegation, the Secretary-General has been unable to send a mission to the occupied territories in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4 of resolution 672 (1990), he has nevertheless been able to carry out his mandate - for which my delegation wishes to congratulate him - by submitting the report in document S/21919 and addenda 1, 2 and 3, which has helped to enable the Council to agree on the terms of resolution 681 (1990), which it has just adopted.

In essence, resolution 681 (1990) requests the Secretary-General to continue to examine the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, to monitor and observe the situation there with the help of United Nations and other personnel and resources present in the area and to report to the Security Council on any acts committed in violation of the human rights of the Palestinians by the occupying security forces.

The Council continues to be concerned at the hardships to which the Palestinians are constantly subjected by the Israeli security forces and has therefore decided to request the Secretary-General to continue to follow the situation, with the assistance of persons stationed in the territories, of course with the objective of protecting the rights of the Palestinians and of ensuring their safety.

My delegation also supports the idea of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and an international peace conference on the Middle East in order to facilitate a negotiated settlement and the establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East. Those reasons alone justify the affirmative vote my delegation has just cast in the voting on resolution 681 (1990).

Mr. TORNUDD (Finland): The events of recent months in the occupied territories have again confirmed the need to deal seriously with the issue of improving protection for Palestinian civilians living under occupation and to put a stop to the continuing cycle of senseless violence in the area.

We were encouraged by the unanimous adoption earlier of resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990) by the Security Council, as well as by the report prepared by the Secretary-General and submitted to the Council some time ago. That report illustrated very clearly the problems at hand and pointed to some possible practical ways of solving them. We agree fully with the concluding remarks in the report, namely, that the issue of protecting Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation is a reflection of a political conflict that needs urgent attention through an effective negotiating process. The same conclusion had already been made in the report submitted by the Secretary-General in January 1988.

We are convinced of the value of the process that began in the Security Council with the adoption of resolution 672 (1990). That resolution, together with the ideas put forward by the Secretary-General, created a momentum that must not be lost. We are happy to note that the process has remained alive. It is time to strengthen impartial monitoring in the occupied territories, as well as to go back to the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the situation in the occupied territories. In our view, a meeting of the high contracting parties could, among other things, produce an authoritative interpretation regarding the scope and applicability of the Convention.

In that connection we wish to thank, first of all, the four sponsors of the original draft resolution, both for their patience and for the time they allowed for members of the Council - including my own delegation - to explore whether a basis for consensus could be found so that no chance to arrive at a unanimous

(Mr. Törnudd, Finland)

resolution would be missed. Particular thanks are due also to the delegation of the United States for its efforts and its perseverance.

Finally, I wish to thank a number of other delegations, both in the Council and outside it, for many helpful and constructive contributions to our work. We are very happy to see that a common basis has been found and that the Council was able to adopt resolution 681 (1990) unanimously. We are well aware that the steps now taken to enhance the protection of the Palestinians are not huge ones. But however modest the outcome might appear to be, the resolution just adopted is without doubt badly needed by the Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation.

In addition to the practical measures leading to increased impartial monitoring, the members of the Council have agreed to a statement that includes a matter of greatest importance for the political settlement of the conflict, the confirmation of the need to convene an international peace conference to deal with the Arab-Israeli conflict. We hope that the steps now taken unanimously by the Security Council will bring us closer, not only to improved protection for the Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation, but also to the process leading to the long-overdue negotiations on a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. RAZALI (Malaysia): This is a big moment for the Council, equal to some of the other important decisions taken by the Council recently. All of us, unanimously, have managed to adopt a resolution on the safety and protection of Palestinians that touches on three important elements.

The first relates to convening a meeting of high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to discuss possible measures to make felt the Convention's responsibility with respect to the protection of civilians in the occupied territories. This is an important development which should send a strong signal to Israel, the occupying Power, that it stands accountable for its actions. Given political commitment in all quarters to convening the meeting, action by the high contracting parties would be a ground-breaking development that would realize their commitment to the goals of the Convention.

The second is that the Secretary-General should undertake special efforts to monitor and observe the situation in the occupied territories, using all resources in the area and elsewhere, and even appointing extra personnel if necessary. This decision by the Council will allow the Secretary-General to take all measures possible to protect the Palestinians languishing under Israeli occupation. If the Israelis continue their repressive actions against Palestinians, the Secretary-General will be in a position to report immediately to the Council. And as there is now full backing by the Council for its resolution - and I am thinking in particular of the support of the United States - there is every possibility that the Council will be able to take appropriate action with respect to Israel. This paragraph is perhaps the core of the resolution and must serve as the centre-piece of all future efforts by the Council to protect Palestinians.

The third element is the Council's acceptance of the convening at an appropriate time of the international peace conference on the Middle East, to bring

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

about a comprehensive settlement and peace in the region. This last point is by necessity formulated in the form of a presidential statement, but the commitment of the Council to such a conference is clear and firm. For the first time, what has been urged by the General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority of countries, year in and year out has been accepted in the Security Council, by all its members. This is a major event. It will be incumbent on the members of the Council and on the general membership of the United Nations to ensure that the future work of the Council does not deviate from this undertaking under any circumstances.

Taken as a whole, these three points mean that there can be developed a comprehensive attempt by the Council to address in full the issue of Palestine and the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Another major achievement of this resolution is its success in restoring the proper reference to Jerusalem as part of the occupied Palestinian territories. Future actions of the Council will permanently manifest that and will constantly challenge any attempt by Israel to alter the status of Jerusalem.

There is also a reference in the resolution to Israel being in a state of violence and tension. Clearly the Council is very concerned at the deteriorating conditions deriving from a policy of repression and conquest and pushing Israel adrift from norms and civilized conduct.

Incorporated in the resolution too is the Council's strong objection to Israel's attempt to deport Palestinians from the occupied territories, something which cannot be tolerated and which has been the object of the Council's condemnation in earlier resolutions.

Since the completion of the Secretary-General's report of 31 October (S/21919), the situation in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, has deteriorated further. On 6 December a series of incidents took place in Khan Yunis

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

refugee camp in the Gaza Strip in which members of the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were physically abused by Israeli border police. Recently the Israeli authorities decided to resume deportation of Palestinian civilians. In addition, it has been reported that the Israeli authorities have issued new orders for army marksmen using live ammunition to be positioned in the occupied territories to shoot at Palestinian stone-throwers. Moreover, the Israeli authorities have ordered the closure of all 260 schools in the Gaza Strip for an indefinite period of time. Two days ago Israeli forces wounded 16 more Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories.

All those actions, whose like we have seen again and again, clearly show the defiant face of the Israeli authorities, who care naught for their obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the various resolutions of the Security Council. These acts are inhuman, unjust and cruel. In terms of the Geneva Convention and what is expected of the Security Council, there can be no difference or distinction between what needs to be done to help people suffering as a result of invasion and what needs to be done to help those languishing under occupation.

The Malaysian delegation does not want to overemphasize what has been achieved today. We understand full well the realities involved and the political obstacles ahead in the Council and outside it. The Council itself is the most politically sensitized organ of the United Nations and must perforce operate in that matrix. There is also reason to be critical of the barriers, including procedural devices, deliberately used to delay the proper and early consideration of the issue. Future action by the Council must be free of these tendencies and tactics lest the Council be open to accusations that it is the vassal, of, or is being shanghaied by,

(Mr. Razali, Malaysia)

powerful countries. We are at that promising point where most factors are converging on genuine internationalism, and all actions of the Council must reflect those developments.

Malaysia is satisfied and honoured as we come to the last few days of our membership of the Security Council to have been party, with others, to the taking of significant steps on the Palestinian issue, a cause that has enjoyed the unswerving commitment of the Government and the people of Malaysia since our independence. The Council's action today was forward-moving and directional.

I should like to thank all those who were involved in bringing about the resolution adopted today, particularly Ambassador Törnudd of Finland and his team and Ambassador Pickering of the United States and his team. Both Ambassadors are totally dedicated professionals who have brought distinction to the Council.

Mr. ANET (Côte d'Ivoire) (interpretation from French): As this is my first statement in a formal meeting this month, permit me, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to join previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for December. We are pleased that it is under your presidency that, after tireless efforts, the Council has just adopted a resolution laying a foundation - albeit a modest one - for a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

Permit me also to congratulate the Permanent Representative of the United States, Ambassador Thomas Pickering, on his presidency last month and on his notable efforts which led us to today's result.

I also thank Ambassador Razali of Malaysia for his work in the course of our negotiations. Nor can I omit my sincere congratulations to that calm force, Ambassador Törnudd of Finland, whose receptiveness and great negotiating skill, at

(Mr. Anet, Côte d'Ivoire)

once tranquil and dynamic, helped us achieve this success which the members of the Council rightly appreciate. We thank his colleagues also.

In voting in favour of the resolution just adopted unanimously, my delegation had an unequivocal purpose: Israel must withdraw from the territories occupied since 1967. My delegation is convinced that there can be no peace in the Middle East so long as the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are not respected. We think the Fourth Geneva Convention applies, de facto and de jure, to the occupied territories - naturally, including Jerusalem. We therefore join in the appeal to Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention.

(Mr. Anet, Côte d'Ivoire)

Côte d'Ivoire endorses all initiatives to assure the protection and security of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. We consider it as part of the process leading to a settlement of the Middle East conflict. My delegation supports the idea of a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report (S/21919), and also the idea that he send his representative to observe the situation in the occupied territories - including Jerusalem, naturally - and that the Secretary-General report to the Council.

It is my delegation's view that an international peace conference on the Middle East must be convened. That conference will offer, when the time comes, the ideal framework for negotiation with a view to promoting a just and lasting peace in the region, on the understanding that no link must be established between this issue and that of the Gulf crisis.

I am persuaded that all of us agree on at least one point regarding the situation in the occupied territories: it is time for something to be done for the Palestinian people. It is within our capacity to find a permanent solution to this conflict - a solution that will be a measure of the credibility of the Security Council. Having said that, my delegation does not intend to give anyone a blank cheque to make its own decisions for it. Nor does my delegation intend to tag along behind another State or any group of States.

The real goal of our action is to reach a just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian problem. Providing security and protection for the Palestinian people, which is the object of this resolution, is only one step in the process.

Each country has the right to take an approach that is different from the approaches of others. Respecting differences is a factor that makes for unity and strength. My country, while respecting the approach that other States may have, prefers the approach that involves small, modest, concrete steps, rather than

(Mr. Anet, Côte d'Ivoire)

positions that, while undoubtedly legitimate, unfortunately lead very often to fruitless vetoes, as in the case of the question of Palestine. The longest journey always begins with the first step. Today we have taken the first step.

My delegation wishes to emphasize that for each problem that comes before the Council Côte d'Ivoire's position will be one that favours constructive dialogue, that leads to concerted action that can guarantee the achievement of our goals.

The history of the Security Council will record, we hope, that some member States, without adopting radical positions, have enabled the Council to show flexibility when it came to safeguarding the Council's united front in order to shape the beginnings of a solution to a thorny problem.

My delegation believes that if we do not seek to maintain cool heads in the face of a problem as serious as that of the occupied Arab territories we shall run the risk of exacerbating passions and of making dialogue impossible, with all the consequences that one might imagine.

We are persuaded that only a realistic approach to the problem can allow us to help in a concrete and effective way the brotherly people of Palestine in their political struggle.

For my delegation this resolution is only one stage in the search for ways and means of lessening the tension that persists there and to create appropriate conditions in which to undertake negotiations with a view to convening an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. My country is prepared to make its contribution at any level whatsoever so that the Palestinian people may one day live in a country with secure and internationally recognized borders, side by side with a State of Israel, also with secure and guaranteed borders. My country will work unremittingly so that hatred may yield to co-operation, confrontation to constructive dialogue, and violence to peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada) (interpretation from French): Since Canada will soon be completing its most recent mandate as a member of the Security Council, my country and my delegation are proud to be associated today with the adoption of the important resolution and the presidential statement.

(spoke in English)

We have reviewed with very careful attention the report of the Secretary-General in the wake of the tragic events of 8 October in Jerusalem. The Secretary-General's report underlines two points which we believe are paramount. The first is the urgent need for the Fourth Geneva Convention to be applied de jure, and not only de facto, in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, which Israel has occupied since 1967. The second point is the urgent need for enhanced protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The resolution that we have just adopted unanimously addresses these two points in a way which continues the constructive consideration that has characterized our deliberations during the past months. It urges the Government of Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the territories it has occupied since 1967 and to abide scrupulously by its provisions. Canada has noted the idea expressed by the Secretary-General in his report with respect to the possible convening of a meeting of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention with a view to discussing possible measures they might take. We believe that this idea deserves to be examined carefully to determine how it might best be put into effect to ensure that such a meeting would be constructive.

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

The position of the Government of Canada on the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 is well known and has been reiterated in this Council on many occasions during our term in the last two years. In this respect, I should like to add today that Canada has joined with others in deploring the decision of the Government of Israel to expel four Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories as being in clear and flagrant violation of that Convention.

Canada believes that the international community has a role to play in protecting the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The resolution responds to this concern by urging the monitoring and observing of the situation, with the help of the United Nations personnel stationed in the region. This should contribute to enhancing the protection of the Palestinians.

My delegation fully supports the statement that you, Mr. President, made on our behalf with respect to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada said to this Council recently - on 29 November -

> "If we can sustain our collective determination, then a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute, which Canada views as necessary and urgent, may be within our grasp" (S/PV.2963, p. 72).

The relentless cycle of violence cannot continue. In this respect, we were shocked by the particularly brutal murder of Israelis last week in Jaffa. The path to peace must be pursued with vigour. Canada believes that this resolution, which is the result of prolonged and intensive negotiations, will make a significant contribution to that process. Once again, our Council has proven that it is able to function as the founders of the United Nations envisaged it would do - building the broadest possible consensus amongst its members on a very difficult issue of international peace and security.

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

In closing I should like to pay a very warm tribute to all those, both within this Council and outside it, who made this possible - particularly our distinguished colleagues, Ambassador Törnudd, Ambassador Razali and Ambassador Pickering, who have worked tirelessly during many weeks to produce a resolution and a statement of which we can all be justifiably proud.

Sir David HANNAY (United Kingdom): My delegation voted for this resolution and has given its whole-hearted support to the statement by the President, which is an integral part of it, with relief and enthusiasm. The negotiations have been long and arduous but in our view the outcome well justifies the effort and the delays which were a necessary part of achieving an agreed result.

The British Government has pursued three objectives in these negotiations. The first has been to endorse proposals which might bring about improvements in the well-being of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. They deserve a greater degree of protection against Israeli breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention, including the resumed policy of deportation, which we deplore and want to see reversed. The resolution rejects that policy. It supports the Secretary-General's idea of preparing a meeting of the signatories to the Geneva Convention and reinforces the Secretary-General's humanitarian role in the occupied territories. All these are practical steps which will, we hope, be of genuine benefit to the Palestinians.

Our second objective has been to address the wider issue of the Arab-Israeli peace process. The statement by the President does that. My Government's support for an international conference at an appropriate time is well known. It was confirmed most recently in the communiqué issued by the 12 members of the European Community after the European Council met in Rome last weekend.

Our third objective was to ensure that any reference to the conference should not risk lending itself to a tendentious interpretation that a link was being made between the long-standing question of Palestine and the crisis in the Gulf. The Government of Iraq, for one, has missed no opportunity in recent weeks to promote such a linkage. My Government firmly rejects this linkage and so now in this presidential statement does the Security Council as a whole.

Mr. PEÑALOSA (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation wishes first to express its thanks to all those who made possible the unanimous adoption of this resolution. In particular, however, we wish to extend those thanks to you, Mr. President, for your own efforts to reach an agreement - an agreement reached after an enormous amount of work over a period of almost two months of exhausting negotiations.

We also want to thank Ambassador Razali who, in representation of the sponsors, took on the very tiring and intellectual task of negotiating this text. What he achieved through his efforts is particularly gratifying for my delegation. We shall always be grateful to him and we believe that his name will be associated with the history of this resolution.

To Ambassador Törnudd of Finland we wish also to extend our thanks for the contribution he made to the achievement of their rapprochement.

Lastly, we want to express our appreciation to Ambassador Pickering for his devotion to this subject and for the efforts he made to arrive at an agreement for the benefit of the Palestinian people. I should like at this point to recall that at our first bilateral meeting with Ambassador Pickering, when he was President of the Council last month, we told him that it was the hope of our delegation that we might be able to do something at that time for the cause of the Palestinian people and not merely repeat resolutions expressing regret for what was happening there. We believe that with this resolution some progress has been made and we are optimistic that this will be the beginning of a continuing process.

Just two weeks before the end of Colombia's mandate as a member of the Security Council, and assuming that this may possibly be our last statement, we do not want to miss this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, to the permanent representatives and the members of the

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

different delegations which have, in one way or another, given us their full support with a view to our working together for the cause of peace, equality and respect for the basic values which govern us today. We extend our appreciation also to each and every one of those persons who painstakingly, in fulfilment of their duty, made it possible for us to make use of the means and services available to the Security Council - to every one of them, our sincere thanks.

For 23 years now a people whose territory has been occupied has been subjected to all types of hardships, acts of violence and disregard of its individual and collective rights. For 23 years now that people has seen the death of hundreds of its young people and children at the hands of snipers and armed forces, just for wanting to be free and claiming their rights like any other human being. For 23 years now the physical and psychological integrity of a population which rejects the domination of an occupying Power has been violated, a people that has seen its homes fall to the demolishing forces of one who at the same time claims to be establishing human settlements to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories.

All of this has occurred without any effective reaction on the part of the world community, and in particular of the Security Council, which, on repeated occasions, has attempted to provide a just and lasting solution to the problem with no improvement having been achieved thus far. What is paradoxical about this is that this is not the usual behaviour, or at least we can state without fear of contradiction, that on some occasions it has not been the usual behaviour.

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

In some cases, there would seem to be legal criteria that admit of no delays or twofold interpretations. In other cases, political considerations are accepted, the work of the Council is affected by outside occurrences, compliance with the rules is ignored, and the Palestinian people are made to wait in greater anguish, all of which creates an atmosphere of distrust on the part of the international community that is not acceptable under any circumstance.

Our position in the Security Council during these two years has been consistently directed towards achieving respect for the principles and norms of international law, in this way reflecting the peaceful purpose implicit in our international policy. The situation that is before us today is one of those cases in which there have been violations of such international norms as those of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, violations of human rights and cases in which the right of a people to self-determination has been restricted. Today, our commitment remains the same and we reaffirm our deep concern at the lack of compliance with the rules. This is why, just as we have condemned such a situation in other cases, we express our profound concern about non-compliance with these principles, the effect of which is pain and loss of life in a region all of whose inhabitants are awaiting the outcome of events in the Gulf, with which we are all familiar.

Our concern is all the more well-founded when we see Israel's non-compliance with the many resolutions adopted by the Security Council, inter alia, the most recent among them, resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), thus showing its lack of interest in co-operating with this organ and, consequently, in improving the regional political climate.

When, 21 years ago, Colombia was last a member of the Security Council, the subject of the territories occupied by Israel was on the Council's agenda. Today that item is still under consideration. Colombia may perhaps not be a member of

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

the Security Council again until a similar period has passed. At that time, we hope that this subject will be part of the grim past of mankind and no longer on the agenda. We make an appeal to the Security Council, and in particular to its permanent members, so that through a determined and forward-looking effort they may solve a problem whose persistence on the agenda becomes increasingly inexplicable, a problem which becomes increasingly indefensible to those who have tried to change the inexorable course of history.

Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania): I am pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the Security Council during the month of December. I offer you my congratulations on fulfilling your mandate in such a responsible manner, especially in carrying on with the arduous task of reaching a consensus on such an important issue as the situation in the occupied territories. I also wish to express once again the sincere appreciation of my delegation for the excellent performance of Ambassador Pickering as President of the Council for the month of November, which coincided with the historic period of activity of this body.

We are again considering the item entitled "The situation in the occupied Arab territories" in the light of the Secretary-General's report on the events in the area and the draft resolution contained in document S/22022, which we have just adopted. Having voted in favour of that draft resolution I would like to pay a tribute to the representative of Finland, who has managed, through a very elaborate negotiating process, together with the representatives of Malaysia, the United States and other colleagues, to produce an acceptable text, which has been adopted by the Council.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

This debate is a continuation of an earlier discussion on the same item, during which many delegations, including my own, had occasion to express themselves. In this respect, I should like to recall that the delegation of Romania supported Security Council resolution 672 (1990), by which the Secretary-General was requested to submit a report containing his findings and conclusions on ways and means of ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians. We also supported resolution 673 (1990), by which the Council addressed a new request to the Secretary-General to submit the report mentioned in resolution 672 (1990). Romania voted in favour of resolution 681 (1990) and fully supported the presidential statement made today.

My delegation would like to commend the Secretary-General for the report he submitted in document S/21919 of 31 October 1990. The report is an accurate and factual document. It offers us a clear picture of the efforts exerted by the Secretary-General to send a mission to the region. It also reflects the point of view of Israel, which at that time decided not to receive such a mission. We are gratified to learn that since the presentation of the report Israel has made some progress in the right direction. I shall refer to that aspect later in this statement.

The report emphasizes the fact that the Secretary-General has been unable to secure independent information on the spot about the circumstances surrounding the recent events in Jerusalem and similar developments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. That being the case, it is quite understandable that the Secretary-General was not in a position to submit recommendations within the meaning of the presidential statement made at the 2948th meeting of the Security Council. Therefore, his observations contained in paragraphs 16 and 21 of the report had to be based, inter alia, on previous recommendations made by the Secretary-General.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

In this respect, we share the recommendation the Secretary-General made as long ago as 21 January 1988 that the international community should make a concerted effort to persuade Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territories and to bring its practices into line with that Convention and thereby to comply fully with it. We note that Israel does not accept formally the de jure applicability of the Convention but states that in 1967 it decided to act in de facto accordance with the Convention's humanitarian provisions and that it has done so.

In the present circumstances, we believe that it is useful to focus our attention on the observation made by the Secretary-General in paragraph 24 of his report. Indeed, the Security Council might wish to call for a meeting of the high contracting parties to discuss possible measures they could take under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Certainly, before the Council takes any decision in this regard, that idea needs very careful consideration and appropriate consultations among all interested parties. In this respect, the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, could invite the high contracting parties to submit their views on the idea of convening a meeting of such parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to discuss possible measures they could take under the Convention, and to report to the Council. Operative paragraph 6 of resolution 681 (1990) offers a balanced solution to that end.

After the submission of the Secretary-General's report, further events took place in the area. We are all gravely concerned over the dangerous deterioration of the situation in the territories. We share the views expressed before the Council that a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), through an active negotiating process that takes into account the right to security for all States in the region, including Israel, as well as the legitimate rights of the Palestinian

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

people. At the same time, we support the opinion of the Secretary-General that it is essential that progress be made - and soon - to ensure an effective negotiating process that is acceptable to all and can secure the interests of Israelis and Palestinians alike and enable them to live in peace with each other. Like other delegations, we are of the view, expressed today in the presidential statement, that an international conference, at an appropriate time and properly structured, should facilitate efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

We believe that the situation in the Middle East - a source of such concern and worry to all of us for so long - can and should be settled in a mutually satisfactory manner by the parties involved. In order to achieve such a result, it is necessary for all the countries and peoples involved in the conflict to act in good faith and come to the negotiating table in order to find solutions that are acceptable and at the same time reflect their respective interests, including self-determination for the peoples of the area. That could be a major contribution to the implementation of a lasting peace in the Middle East.

At the same time, we express our serious concern at the tragic events in the occupied territories that have resulted in the death and wounding of many Palestinians. We disapprove of any indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force, which only stirs up tensions and encourages further violence. Only a firm commitment to the principles of negotiation and peaceful solution can lead to an eventual settlement of the situation in the Middle East. Therefore, we reiterate our appeal to all parties involved to refrain from any acts that could worsen the situation in the area and to follow the path of peace by adopting measures that will prevent the recurrence of such tragic incidents.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

The prolongation of violent confrontation can only lead to an escalation of the conflict. Instead, we advocate peaceful means, on the understanding that a halt to the violence in the region will be achieved only by a general settlement of the Middle East crisis. The Security Council should shoulder its basic responsibility to promote and defend world peace by ensuring the implementation of relevant resolutions adopted by the Council itself. Those documents clearly stress the necessity of Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied after the 1967 war, respect for Palestinian rights, and firm guarantees for the security of Israel and all the other States in the area. No party should be allowed to jeopardize world peace by trying to promote its own interests by means of force of any sort.

It is undeniable that the situation of the population in the occupied territories should be considered in the broader framework of the Palestinian problem. Therefore, we favour dialogue on that issue and believe that pressures and acts of force, irrespective of which side they come from, cannot encourage the identification of a viable solution. The maintenance of tension in the occupied territories is not the way towards a climate of peace.

We have noted with interest that the Government of Israel has invited the Secretary-General to visit and to send his Representative to continue discussions as indicated in paragraph 22 of the Secretary-General's report (S/21919). We have taken note that this idea is also reflected in the resolution adopted today.

(Mr. Munteanu, Romania)

We welcome the exercise of the good offices of the Secretary-General, whose dedication to a comprehensive and lasting peace settlement in the whole region of the Middle East is well known, and that he will keep the Security Council regularly informed, as requested in operative paragraph 7 of resolution 681 (1990).

Finally, we express the hope that the Council will identify constructive, consensus solutions that can receive the full co-operation of all the parties to the conflict. My delegation pledges its support to efforts undertaken towards that end, and is ready to co-operate with all the other delegations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I thank the representative of Romania for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation expresses its deep satisfaction over the results of today's meeting of the Council. We have unanimously adopted an important decision in the interests of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Drafting this resolution took a great deal of time, it is true, but the work itself went in the right direction, the direction of finding a text agreed upon by all members of the Council. The result has turned out to be constructive.

We wish to congratulate all delegations on this success, including the Palestinian delegation, which actively participated in drafting the resolution and in the statement by the President. In our contacts with the sponsors and with other members of the Council in recent weeks, we consistently followed the policy that the draft resolution should be generally acceptable.

We repeatedly emphasized that the members of the Council could, by all supporting the resolution, guarantee the implementation of measures to protect the Palestinian populations in the occupied territories. In the resolution we have adopted, we find the key passage to be the provision protecting the Palestinians

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

under Israeli occupation. The provisions of the resolutions on the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including the territory of Jerusalem, and on ensuring observance of the Convention by the occupying Power are geared to achieving this. That was also the aim of the idea of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties to that Convention.

We would also like to emphasize the main point, which is the request to the Secretary-General to observe the situation in the occupied territories with the help of the United Nations staff there and to appoint the necessary additional personnel to carry out the task.

The fact that the Israeli authorities again violated international law at a time when the Security Council was carrying out intensive work on the draft resolution - I refer to the deportation of four Palestinians from Gaza - is yet another argument in favour of having the Council continue its persistent search for an outcome that would ensure practical protection for the population of the occupied territories; this search has finally been crowned with success.

We express our satisfaction that the participants in this work had enough patience, and, I would say, political will, to find a generally acceptable form of words and to adopt the draft resolution unanimously. We are particularly gratified by this because the absence of a decision by the Security Council on so important a problem as that of ensuring the security of the Palestinians in the occupied territories would run counter to the interests of the Palestinian people.

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

We express particular satisfaction also because the persistent efforts of the participants in the negotiations reaffirmed a practice that has begun to carve a path for itself, that of agreeing decisions through consultations and seeking generally acceptable compromises.

Finally, we are pleased that an additional stimulus has been given to the process towards settling the Middle East problem as a whole, and that, in this stage, we succeeded in affirming an important provision concerning the need to enhance the negotiating process on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

In respect of the thesis, reaffirmed in the presidential statement, that an international conference on the Middle East should be held, we should like to recall that the Soviet Union, both in the United Nations and in its bilateral contacts, accords this problem high priority. We have on not a few occasions expressed our readiness to develop further our contacts with all interested parties in order to achieve a Middle East settlement, and have proposed, more than once, that we should move on to practical preparations for the international conference that will achieve these goals.

Clearly, Iraq's aggression against Kuwait was a serious blow to the efforts to convene an international peace conference to solve the Middle East problem. It is really absurd to try to link a solution for one problem to a solution for the other. At the same time, we have to go on doing what we began to do before: seeking a way towards a comprehensive settlement of the entire set of problems that beset the Middle East even before 2 August. We shall be prepared to make further constructive contributions to a Middle East settlement and to co-operate actively with all parties in the interests of achieving genuine progress in solving the Palestinian problem.

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The people of Palestine have national rights that are inalienable: they include the right to national self-determination and to independence, they include the right to establish their own sovereign and independent State, and they include the right to equality and to be treated on an equal footing with other peoples and nations.

For 23 years, the question of Palestine has been indissolubly linked to the history of the Security Council. Overall, it has taken a toll on the Council, revealing its inaction and its lack of sensitivity, not only in the face of the root-and-branch negation of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, but also in the face of the facts brought before the Council on a regular basis: the flagrant violations of the basic human rights of the civilian population of that country, and grave situations such as those the Council has been considering since October.

The outcome, over and above the question of the Council's lack of action, has been lamentable if we take into account the fact that by not acting, by not showing the necessary sensitivity to the subject, the Council has been disregarding its fundamental obligations, and, in particular, the successive and constant calls by the international community expressed through the many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

Today, we have adopted a draft resolution and the statement which the President made on behalf of us all, and in the view of our delegation these constitute positive results. This is a first step - a modest, limited, discreet one to be sure - but one which we cannot fail to regard as a step in the right direction.

We would like first of all to express to you, Mr. President, our appreciation and gratitude for the efforts that you have been making - efforts which have had great weight in the results obtained today. You have shown how it is possible in a democratic way, with respect for the positions and views of all members of the Council, to arrive at a unanimous decision.

We also want to express our appreciation to Ambassador Razali for his tireless efforts throughout these long days of negotiations during which he demonstrated his firm commitment to the defence of fundamental principles and also his intelligence and skill in those negotiations. We were among a number of countries which put forward ideas with regard to the draft resolution adopted today and we certainly felt well represented at all times by Ambassador Razali.

We also want to express our appreciation to Ambassador Törnudd of Finland, whose work undoubtedly contributed to our achieving the results that we have obtained today. I cannot fail to extend appreciation also to Ambassador Pickering and his delegation for the efforts that they also put forth to arrive at the decision that we have unanimously adopted this afternoon.

Other delegations have referred to different aspects of the text of the resolution. I will not elaborate on any of those points. I will simply draw attention to the first preambular paragraph, which states:

"Reaffirming the obligations of Member States under the United Nations Charter".

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

We often pay less attention to preambular paragraphs of a resolution, and particularly the first paragraph. None the less my delegation believes this to be one of the most important paragraphs of resolution 681 (1990). This paragraph indicates that Israel has an obligation in respect of the decisions adopted by the Council, inter alia, this resolution. But, in addition, I would say that this paragraph reminds all members of the Security Council - since we are all also Members of the United Nations - that we have obligations under the United Nations Charter. In our view, these obligations, presuppose, above all, a duty to act in the way that the Council should act in all circumstances and on any item. We cannot fail to indicate on this occasion that the attitude taken by the Security Council has not always been the same in its consideration of other issues.

We welcome unanimity. We welcome the spirit of consensus that prevailed in the end, but we cannot fail to point out that that spirit, that resolve, has not always been present in the Council's recent actions.

On other occasions, the need to negotiate patiently and the need to accommodate the views of all members of the Council have not always been borne in mind. Action has been taken hastily - indeed, too hastily - to adopt resolutions that none the less have very specific implications for many States, not just the members of the Council, without the same spirit of patience and desire for negotiation and for consensus having been shown as it has in the nearly two months that it has taken the Council to arrive at resolution 681 (1990).

This has been true even in the case of several resolutions adopted by the Council which, to say the least, did not reflect fulfilment of the obligation that recalled in the first preambular paragraph of resolution 681 (1990) - cases that involved violations of the Charter.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

By its vote in favour of the decision adopted today, my delegation wishes to reflect its conviction that all the members of the Council must comply with their obligations under the Charter if we are in fact to enter what has been termed "a new world order". If we are talking about something new, it must be based not on a style of action that reminds us at times of our action based not so much on democratic methods as on monarchical absolutism. If it is an order that is not going to be based on the democratization of international relations it will be a new world order but it will not really be new.

The new order that lies ahead, in order to be genuinely new must be based on the sovereign equality of States and on unrestricted respect for the principles and norms of international law, including the procedures of the Council, and the principles and norms of the Charter. It should be based on the democratization of international relations and that must begin with the Security Council itself.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): The United States has supported this text. However, I also want to make it clear that there are a number of elements in the text which cause us concern. There are also elements that are not in the text which we believe ought to have been there.

For instance, we believe the Council ought to have been willing to say to Palestinians that the use of violence to achieve their ends is wrong. We lament all the continued violence in the area and, particularly, in Israel, where innocent people have been the victims of numerous stabbing attempts.

The Security Council began this debate several months ago with the intention of achieving a resolution concerning the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories and that is what we have accomplished today. This has been

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

accomplished only after long, excruciating, intense consultations among members of the Council.

It has taken us far too long to reach this point. Far too much of our energies have been spent to the detriment of other pressing issues facing the Council, including having to deal with proposals that would have done nothing to improve the situation in the occupied territories.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

None the less, I express my appreciation to all those of my colleagues who engaged in these intensive consultations in good faith to achieve a text we all could support, and especially to Ambassador Klaus Törnudd of Finland and Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia.

Let there be no mistake, however; our vote for this resolution is designed to demonstrate - as we have done all along - our deep concern about the situation in the occupied territories. Our vote today in no way indicates a change in United States policy on any issue related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

First, we have made it clear that the United States has not changed its position on an international conference on the Arab-Israeli dispute. As Secretary Baker has said:

> "We have not in any way or to any extent or to any degree shifted our policy regarding the question of an international conference.
>
> "First of all we have taken the position for a long time that an international conference, properly structured, at an appropriate time, might be useful. That has been the policy of the United States for a long time."
>
> "We are not now recommending that an international conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict be held, nor are we supporting a resolution in the Security Council that would seek to convene such a conference.
>
> "Precisely because of our consistent position that we will not link the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israeli dispute, this is certainly not an appropriate time for an international conference."

Indeed, in our consultations on the resolution before us today, we have turned aside efforts that would have linked this resolution to the crisis in the Gulf. Saddam Hussein has tried to link the idea of an international conference to his invasion of Kuwait, and the Council has deprived him of any satisfaction in this

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

regard. Saddam Hussein did not invade Kuwait to benefit Palestinians; he did so for his own self-aggrandizement. Nor should Saddam be rewarded for this aggression by being made to appear a saviour of the Palestinian people. Nothing could be further from the truth. If anything, Saddam's actions have set back the pursuit of peace and taken Palestinians farther than ever from their goal. Linkage of the solution of the Gulf crisis with the Arab-Israeli conflict would not only be wrong; it would undercut the efforts of the international community to reverse Iraq's aggression, as evidenced by the 12 resolutions this body has adopted against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Secondly, the United States has consistently maintained that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies to all of the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. The United States has supported the position here at the United Nations, and we urge the Government of Israel - in fulfilment of its obligations as a high contracting party, and in accordance with its responsibilities under article 1 of the Convention - to ensure respect for the Convention and to accept its de jure application and its provisions.

As stated in the past, the United States regards the phrase "Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967", which appears in the resolution, as being merely demographically and geographically descriptive, and not indicative of sovereignty.

Finally, the United States position on deportations has not changed. Indeed, during the course of the Council's consideration of this issue the Government of Israel announced its intention to resume deportations. The United States deplores this decision. We believe that such deportations are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention as it pertains to the treatment of inhabitants of occupied territories. We condemn the increasing attacks on Israelis and the deaths which

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

have resulted, just as we condemn attacks on Palestinians. Violence is not the way forward; neither, however, are deportations an effective or acceptable answer to violence. We strongly urge the Government of Israel to immediately and permanently cease deportations and to comply fully with the Fourth Geneva Convention in all of the territories it has occupied since 5 June 1967.

The tragic events that have prompted this latest round of Security Council resolutions on the dangerous deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories occurred against a background of increasing violence. We call on all sides to exercise maximum restraint so as to avoid further violence and bloodshed.

I also want to take this opportunity to clarify for the record United States views on several elements of this resolution. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to invite the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to submit their views on the idea of convening a meeting of the high contracting parties, and states that the Council looks forward to receiving those views. As a high contracting party, my Government has serious questions whether such a meeting realistically can help to improve the conditions of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. A premature decision to convene such a conference would invite uncertainty and confusion that, in the end, could undermine rather than contribute to the safety and protection of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation and, more generally, could have adverse impacts on the future implementation of the Conventions.

The United States strongly supports the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to monitor and report on the situation in the occupied territories. None the less, my Government wants to explain its view regarding the scope of the Council's request that the Secretary-General utilize available personnel of various United Nations organizations in the region and elsewhere for

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

this purpose. United Nations personnel in the area are mostly employees of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), organizations with separate and well-defined mandates. We believe no activity should be undertaken that would alter those mandates, which remain in force, and we would oppose any attempt to alter them.

We are pleased to note that the Government of Israel has invited the Secretary-General to visit and also to send his envoy again to Israel and the occupied territories. We strongly hope that this visit will take place soon and that these efforts can lead to a genuine amelioration of the situation for Palestinians in the territories and an end to the bloodshed between Israelis and Palestinians.

For our part, the United States reaffirms its commitment and determination to support an active negotiating process leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, which should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and which should take into account the right to security of all States in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people. This process of negotiations between the parties concerned is the only way that will advance the cause of peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and all of our efforts should be actively focused on renewing this process.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I wish sincerely to thank Mr. Törnudd, the Permanent Representative of Finland, who conducted many negotiations for me over the past few weeks, and Mr. Razali of Malaysia, the representative of the sponsors, as well as Mr. Thomas Pickering, the Permanent Representative of the United States.

I wish now to make a short statement as representative of Yemen.

(The President)

Our delegation voted in favour of resolution 681 (1990) in a spirit of co-operation and in view of the negotiations we participated in from the beginning. The resolution is the result of concessions made by all parties. However, I must state that my delegation would have liked a much stronger resolution, with regard to the following points:

First, with regard to the recent resumption of deportations of Palestinians by the Israeli Government and the declaration by the Israeli authorities that the deportations will continue, we believed that the Council should have used stronger language and should have demanded the return of the deportees. The Council should demand that Israel desist from such practices, which breach the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Secondly, with regard to the protection of the Palestinians, which is the principal issue in the resolution, my delegation would have preferred that the Council appoint a general commissioner for the protection of the Palestinians, with clear instructions to such a commissioner to report regularly to the Security Council.

Thirdly, as for the international conference on the Middle East, given the fact that the Council now works actively and austerely, we would have liked to have the resolution set a specific time frame for convening such a conference. However, it appears from the statements we have just heard, especially that of the representative of the United States of America, that the international conference will not be held soon and that we are talking here of an open-ended time frame that may stretch on endlessly. The delegation of Yemen wishes to stress the need to move to a higher level in dealing with the problem of the Middle East by setting a time frame for the convening of that conference, with the participation of all the

(The President)

permanent members of the Security Council, for we believe that that is the only framework that can lead to a negotiating process that may ultimately lead to peace.

I should also like to take this opportunity to refer to the issue of Al-Quds and to the paragraph in the draft resolution that refers to the part of Al-Quds occupied since 1967. Reference to Al-Quds has a special importance for us because Al-Quds is at the heart of the conflict and because the building of the latest Israeli settlements has taken place in East Al-Quds, which is Arab territory. Moreover, Al-Quds has been extended, through the new Israeli rules, to include 33 per cent of the land on the West Bank. Therefore, it is important to underline the fact that Al-Quds has been occupied since 1967 and that it is covered by the provisions of the Geneva Convention. It is of paramount importance to us that that be confirmed in the resolution.

Since there has been much recent talk of linkage between the Gulf crisis and the problem of the Middle East, I should like in conclusion to recount a brief folk tale that may portray the overall situation with regard to this problem. The story - which, by the way, is an old Chinese proverb - goes as follows: A farmer had some silver coins and wanted to hide them somewhere. He therefore dug up a small hole in his orchard and buried the coins in it. He then put up a sign reading: "There are no silver coins buried here."

The moral of that terse little tale is that the more we affirm that there is no linkage between the Gulf crisis and the Middle East problem, the more we highlight that link. It is not so because there is any specific framework for addressing both issues, given the fact that we insist on working within the context of an international conference, as stated in the statement, but because all the issues dealt with by the Security Council and which remain on its agenda are

(The President)

interlinked in one way or another. Therefore it is far more preferable not to speak of linkage or non-linkage, but to focus on the issues that are on the Council's agenda.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of Israel has asked to be allowed to speak. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. ARIDOR (Israel): The Security Council has now called upon the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure so-called respect by Israel for the said Convention. The Security Council continued and requested the Secretary-General to develop further the idea of convening a meeting of such parties to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention. These ideas are unprecedented.

The millions slaughtered during the 41 years since the Fourth Geneva Convention was codified did not enjoy similar treatment by the Security Council, either before or after their deaths. Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, gets special, separate and unequal treatment from the Council on a consistent basis. The formal pretext is the protection of civilians. This practice smacks of the demands, in the name of human rights, for the protection of the Sudeten Germans in the late 1930s. Those demands were made against their alleged oppression by democratic Czechoslovakia under the presidency of Mr. Eduard Benes. That was the prelude to appeasement.

With respect to the reference in the present resolution to Jerusalem, the eternal capital of Israel, our position is well known and does not require any further elaboration.

(Mr. Aridor, Israel)

The request by the Security Council to the Secretary-General to make renewed efforts to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians is another instance of singling out Israel. If monitoring and observing serves the protection of human rights to such an exemplary degree, in what manner are other inhabitants of this planet who genuinely suffer violation of their human rights inferior? Israel, however, receives separate but unequal treatment. The tasks and powers of the United Nations personnel in the area have been agreed upon with the State of Israel. It would be both highly inappropriate and impractical that a resolution of the Security Council should alter such an agreed-upon basis.

(Mr. Aridor, Israel)

In this context, I should like to refer to the principle set forth in this very debate by one of the members of the Council:

"We should be thinking in terms not of political gestures, but of practical results. We must not embrace ideas that stand no chance of being implemented. There is no point in pursuing courses that end in deadlock; that does nothing for the standing of the Council and nothing to improve the situation on the ground". (S/PV.2965, p. 8)

I could not agree more.

Today's resolution refers to the presidential statement, which supports the convening of an international peace conference at the appropriate time. No time is appropriate for the convening of a so-called international peace conference, but any time is appropriate for bilateral and direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbours. The nature of an international peace conference was underscored by today's vote. The consequences of an international peace conference were underscored after Munich in 1938. Today Israel is the one singled out for special treatment. This idea is a tool for the imposition of a predetermined outcome. The only road to peace is through direct face-to-face negotiations. We will not play a role in the resurrection of Munich.

Israel, according to the rule of law as interpreted by Israel's Supreme Court, has the right in the appropriate circumstances to expel terrorists. The Security Council today expressed its alarm at Israel's decision to issue expulsion orders against four leaders of Hamas, an extremist organization responsible for the recent murders of many Jews, three of them only last week. The Security Council was not alarmed by those murders, and did not even bother to mention them or even to express its regret at these violent killings. The blood of a Jew is not even

(Mr. Aridor, Israel)

worthy of mention by the Security Council. This should be the subject of the Security Council's genuine alarm. The fact that it is not underscores the unequal treatment the Jews and Israel get from the Council.

But what is the real meaning of separate treatment? The United States Supreme Court determined in Brown vs. Board of Education, a landmark case of equal treatment under the law, that separation is inherently unequal. The year was 1954. At issue was the protection of black Americans from underhanded discrimination known as the doctrine of "separate but equal".

The proponents of such exclusionary practices here are safely out of the reach of the constitutional principles of the United States. The practice of singling out one country - always one country, always the Jewish State - not only undermines the inviolable principles of universality and sovereign equality: separate but unequal, translated into Afrikaans, is one ugly word, apartheid. This political apartheid is to be condemned like any other form of apartheid. Peace and security will never be achieved through discrimination or by continued persecution of the Jewish State. We will not accommodate any discriminatory procedure or treatment.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The representative of Palestine has asked to be allowed to make a statement. I call on him now.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): Since this is the first time I have spoken in the Security Council this month, may I join other speakers, including the Foreign Minister of Palestine, in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for December. I wish you success in your important work.

I wish also to thank Ambassador Pickering for his work as President of the Council last month.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

Today the Security Council made important, substantial progress towards protecting the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, towards the creation of the machinery necessary for that purpose, towards the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the core of that conflict, the question of Palestine, and towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

It is important to note that this progress was achieved through the unanimous adoption of a Security Council resolution and through a presidential statement authorized unanimously. This is the first policy statement on the Middle East the Council has adopted in a long time, and it is a political fact regardless of the statements we have heard here today.

Needless to say, this is not the resolution we wanted. Nor does it reflect the position we felt the Security Council should adopt in view of the current situation in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Arab Al-Quds, and in view of the volatile situation in the Middle East in general.

Moreover, it is very difficult for us to accept certain parts of the resolution with which we differ. We differ in particular with portions of the presidential statement read out today. But these are the political realities of the international situation, as well as the realities of the balance within the Council and of the spirit of consensus which requires constant compromise. However, we hope that today's resolution will be a step that will be followed by other steps by the Council for otherwise, today's action will remain isolated and without significant value.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

If, today, the Council has finally succeeded in taking measures with regard to a question that has been before it for a long time, namely, the situation in the occupied territories, this can be attributed, in our view, to the efforts of the four Council members who sponsored the original draft resolution, the determination of those four States to have the Council adopt measures and their praiseworthy perseverance in the face of attempts to water down, to delay and to cancel. On behalf of our people we thank Colombia, Cuba, Malaysia and Yemen.

In this regard, it is our duty to make special mention of the efforts of Ambassador Ismail Razali, in negotiations with other parties, to achieve the results that we have today.

We must not fail to refer to the position of China and the position of France with regard to the attempts at postponement which were deemed unjustified delay. We must also thank Finland too for the great efforts that it made to achieve a solution to the problems that we all faced. Finally, we thank all the members of the Council who voted in favour of the resolution - making it the third resolution in recent times to be adopted unanimously. The presidential statement too was adopted.

Had conditions been normal I could have concluded at this point. However, as members of the Council know, what happened within the framework of the Council was not in any way ordinary. We think that the positive result that we have achieved today should not prevent us from addressing the negative and dangerous aspects of the situation - particularly the action that prevented the Council from performing its duty by adopting a resolution at an earlier stage, at least at an appropriate and reasonable time. We mention this not just to draw attention to the negative aspects of the matter but because we are convinced that those negative aspects should not be overlooked. It is our belief that those aspects should be confronted so that they may not be repeated in the future.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

In the past, there was repeated criticism of a permanent member of the Council because that State abused its veto repeatedly, in relation to the Middle East, the question of Palestine and the territories occupied since 1967. It was a bitter veto that was used repeatedly. We hope that in future the Council will not be prevented from adopting any resolution just because the text of that resolution is not in line with the position of the permament member.

Throughout the long period during which the Council has been seized of the question of the Palestinian occupied territories, the situation in those territories remained volatile. The Israeli authorities stepped up their repression against our Palestinian people, riding roughshod over principles and breaking all previous records in the process.

We refer to the avalanche of statements by Israeli officials about Al-Quds which are in direct violation of resolutions of the Council and of the United Nations Charter.

We refer, secondly, to the statements with regard to the intention to settle Soviet immigrants in the occupied territories. We refer also to the prefabricated houses that are being erected on a massive scale in those territories. Unless something is done to prevent it, those houses will eventually be occupied.

We refer to the phenomenon of snipers shooting children and men who hurl stones in the direction of any Israeli. They shoot because Israelis are the "chosen" people - "chosen" by God - and because, therefore, we should not hurl stones at them. Thus the legal and political bases of Israel's most recent pretext in this regard - the pretext of self-defence - is removed. We all know that in history there is not a single precedent of an occupying Power, or any other State, resorting to the use of snipers to shoot unarmed civilians simply because they were hurling stones. The renewed policy of deportation makes it crystal clear that Israel is bent on continuing in this direction.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

These are but a few examples. They have been substantiated today by the representative of Israel in his intervention which reminded us of the dark ages, the ages of ignorance. The statement of the representative of Israel does not belong to the contemporary world; nor does it belong to this international Organization or to this Council. All of this is evidence that in the future the Council must deal differently, more seriously, with the Israeli side.

It is now 20 minutes past three, and I do not want to take too long. However, I should like to remind the Council that just a few days ago, the Palestinian people celebrated the beginning of the fourth year of the glorious intifadah - the uprising that will continue until the Palestinian people establishes its independent State and exercises its sovereignty over it.

In a few days' time, the entire world will celebrate Christmas - the birthday of the Palestinian master, our master Jesus. Peace be upon him. It is a good omen for our people and for the peoples of the whole world.

I thank you all; I thank you, Mr. President; and I wish you a happy Christmas.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): There are no further names on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Council will remained seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.